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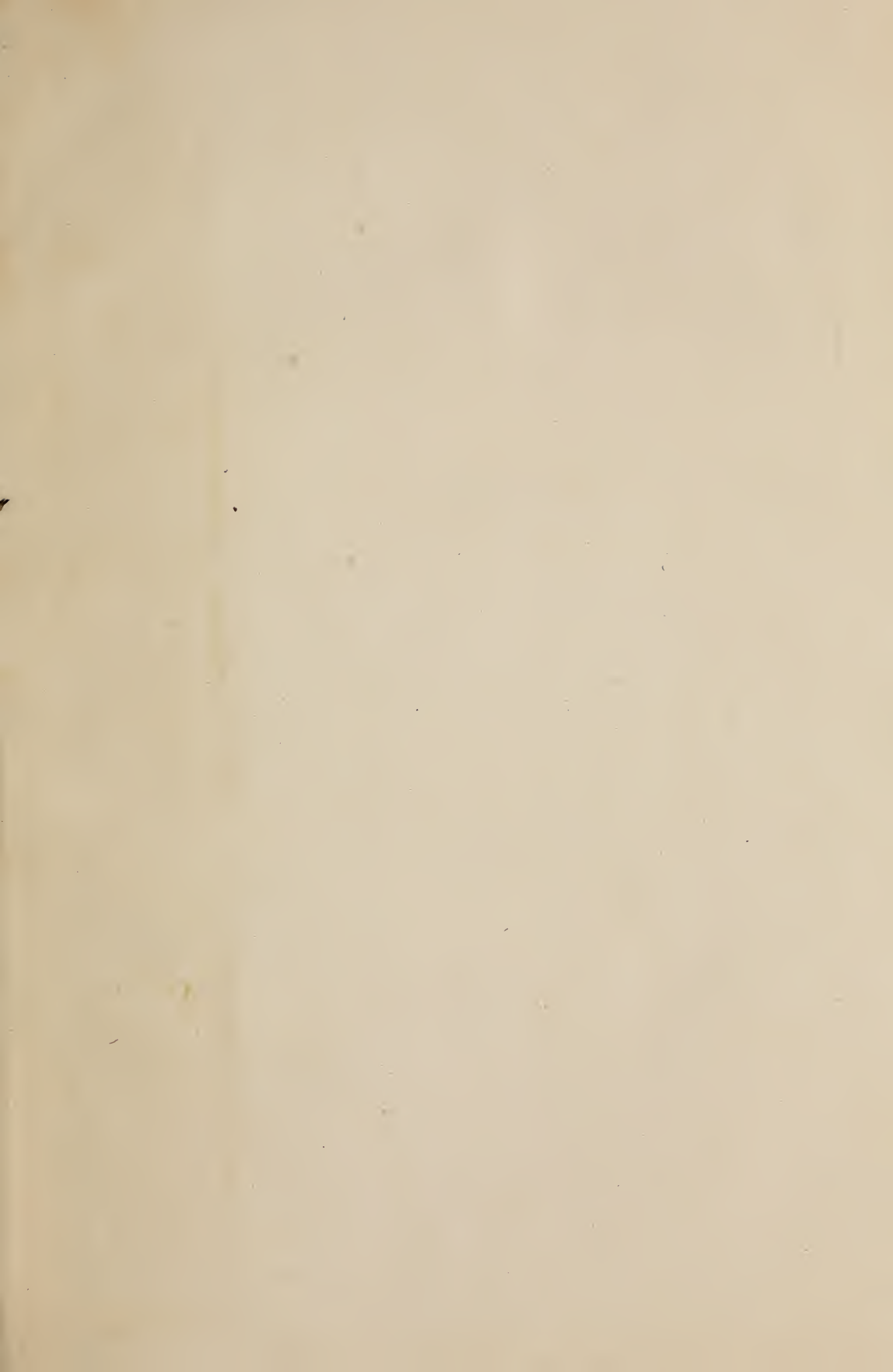
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



ENGLAND'S DANGER

AND

HER SAFETY.

A LETTER

TO

EARL RUSSELL, K.G.,

HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

BY

FREDERICK MILNES EDGE.



LONDON:

WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY. W.

1864.

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TO THE
RIGHT HON. EARL RUSSELL.

MY LORD,

However desirous the people of this country and the Government of her Majesty may be to maintain amicable relations with Foreign Powers, the fact cannot be ignored that the peace of Europe rests upon a very uncertain basis. The pulse of the body politic—that most sensitive indicator the public funds—has beaten feverishly during many weeks past; and the least unreasonable explanation that can be given for the excitement is a growing apprehension in the minds of business men in this country, and on the Continent, of an approaching European war.

It is very far from being the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty alone which menaces the peace of Europe. From the German and Atlantic oceans to the steppes of Russia and the mountains of India, the nations are restless and excited. The revolutions and insurrections which started into being with the close of the American war of independence promise to break forth again with more than pristine force; and all the probabilities are in favour of a widely different

result from that of former years, for the march of intelligence and the hard-taught lessons of experience have prepared the peoples of Europe for the impending crisis.

Great Britain is so interested in the maintenance of things as they are, that there is danger of our ignoring what has long been obvious to the outside world. We have nothing to gain by hostilities in any latitude, no "destiny" to accomplish, or "ideas" to develop by diplomacy or conquest; everything prompts us to maintain neutrality everywhere; and this being incontrovertibly our interest, there is a general tendency to disregard those causes and principles which militate against our welfare. Warnings innumerable have been given during the past ten years, but every additional warning only serves to blind us to future probabilities, and to harden us in the belief that our stability is assured, and our prosperity immovable. We profess to believe in the maintenance of peace, and yet our actions for years past have belied our professions. Our military expenditure has increased in an unexampled ratio; we have thought it necessary to establish an enormous standing army of volunteers, to maintain our regular army at its maximum, to increase our navy by never ending additions of expensive ships; and, while we have continued on this course, other nations have striven to their utmost to keep pace with ourselves in military preparations. Why is this? There is but one reasonable, one possible explanation, and

that is the universal conviction of a rapidly approaching and general European war.

The Emperor Napoleon III. merely gave expression to a long held and universally felt opinion when he declared in the month of November last that the present political structure of Europe was too seriously shaken to longer exist, and that peace in the future could alone be possible by a thorough remodelling of the political map. He declared still further, that this necessity so apparent to all, was regarded by himself as a personal duty; and having emphatically asserted that the peace of the Continent could no longer be maintained upon the existing bases, he showed conclusively that our accumulating complications must be resolved by peaceful diplomatic concessions, or by resort to the sword. Fortunately for our country, the Emperor's invitation was courteously but firmly declined; fortunately, because the proposed Congress would necessarily have led to a second Treaty of Vienna, or worse; and Great Britain, the only liberal and truly conservative nation in Europe, overwhelmed by the majority in the Congress, would perforce have been made a party to an arrangement which must have shackled her to the car of Continental policy and despotism through many succeeding years. Time may eventually enlighten us upon the true causes which induced the Emperor to issue his invitation, the animus of which was so apparent and therefore

so certain to be declined by a Power without whose concurrence the Congress became impossible.

Did the Emperor deceive himself into the belief that England would listen to the proposal; or are we to imagine that any English statesman would so far ignore the sentiment of his country as to lead the Emperor to suppose that such an invitation would be acceptable? The idea of the Congress in its inception was not French but Russian, having first been broached by the Czar in reply to the letters of the Western Powers on the subject of Poland: France, in adopting the suggestion of Russia, would naturally have acted with Russia upon the main questions discussed by the Congress, and Great Britain would necessarily have found herself in a hopeless minority. Your Lordship's declension of the invitation avoided the dangers incident to the proposed council, and has incalculably increased the gratitude and confidence of the loyal subjects of the Crown.

Great Britain's refusal to accede to the Emperor's proposal of a Congress, added to the events now transpiring in Denmark, have rendered the alternative of peace almost impossible. This belief is general, and the nations of Europe are now arming themselves for the seemingly unavoidable conflict.

Will it be possible for Great Britain to hold aloof from a contest which all the omens prove to be imminent? If carried away by the universal rush

to arms, on which side shall we draw our sword, and to whom have we now the right to look as our allies?

The last Message of the Emperor Napoleon, and, above all, his Letter to the Sovereigns of Europe, are not translated in France or on the Continent as in Great Britain. Here, these documents were received generally as showing a desire to prevent war; there, as a pretext for eventually engaging in hostilities, coupled with a threat of arousing the revolutionary element in Europe. It is reasonable to suppose that the Emperor Napoleon is better understood in his own country than in ours. Such propositions as the following are neither conservative nor peaceful; the most stolid intellect can only regard them as revolutionary and bellicose.

“Cet appel, j’aime à le croire, sera entendu de tous. Un refus ferait supposer de secrets qui redoutent le grand jour; mais quand même la proposition ne serait unanimement agréée, elle aurait l’immense avantage d’avoir signalé à l’Europe où est le danger, où est le salut.

“Deux voies sont ouvertes: l’une conduit au progrès par la conciliation et la paix; l’autre, tôt ou tard, mène fatalement à la guerre par l’obstination à maintenir un passé qui s’écroule.”
—(*Discours de l’Empereur: prononcé le 5 Nov. 1863.*)

“N’attendans pas pour prendre un parti que des événements soudains, irrésistibles, troublent notre

“ jugement et nous entraînent, malgré nous, dans
 “ des directions contraires. * * * Appelé au
 “ trône par la Providence et par la volonté du
 “ peuple français, mais élevé à l'école de l'adversité
 “ il m'est peut-être moins permis qu'à un autre
 “ d'ignorer et les droits des souverains et les légi-
 “ times aspirations des peuples.”—(*Lettre de l'Em-
 péreur aux Souverains de l'Europe, 4 Novembre,
 1863.*)

The events now transpiring in Schleswig and Holstein ; the condition of affairs in Germany, and, above all, in Prussia ; the struggle in Poland ; the movements in Italy and Hungary ; the precarious status in Turkey and the Danubian Principalities ; all afford a startling comment upon this menace of the Emperor. There can be but one solution for these intricate complications. The day for diplomatic compromises is well nigh past, and the sword must shortly sever the Gordian knot of so many difficulties.

Were it possible for Great Britain to maintain neutrality in such a contest, there would be few, if any, Englishmen who would demur to the policy. We have never gained anything by our repeated interference in Continental affairs, and our manufacturing and mercantile interests, so wonderfully increased during the present century, are additional reasons for continuing amicable relations with Foreign Powers. But these manufacturing and commercial interests require outlets, and a general

European war will certainly interfere with our markets, and possibly, not to say probably, demand our interference. Great Britain is scarcely the Power at the present period that she was at the commencement of this century. The introduction of steam ; our dependence upon foreign nations for a considerable portion of the food of our people ; the requirements of our manufacturing and commercial interests ; and, above all, the wonderful growth of a rival manufacturing and commercial Power, have placed us at a disadvantage as compared with other countries,—a disadvantage which, at all events did not exist to anything like an equal extent at the period of the last European war. More than any other nation our exceptional position compels us to cultivate peaceful relations with the outside world ; and, should we be forced into hostilities, we must obviously suffer incomparably more than others in the conflict.

Our policy for some years past has not made us friends among the governments and peoples of Europe, and it would not be safe for us to count upon any of them as a friend or ally in a general war. Germany dislikes us for other reasons than our alliance with France, and the policy on which she has lately embarked may seriously affect our interests. Russia still smarts from her reverses in the Crimea, and her “destiny” in the East can only be possible of accomplishment when Great Britain is powerless to prevent it. France will never give

up her "idea" of the Rhine boundary; and her Emperor may not only be too willing to engage in war, not merely with the object of effecting the long coveted annexation of the Rhenish Provinces, but, in addition, to silence the discussion of domestic concerns by his people. Worst of all, the Power, which of all others can most damage our prosperity, has a lengthy catalogue of grievances against us; and a dire probability exists that England's extremity may prove America's opportunity. With such a prospect, it would not be safe for us to go to war with even such an insignificant Power as Brazil.

Were it not for the critical condition of our relations with the United States, we might preserve our desired neutrality even in face of an European war. The only Power which can seriously interfere with our interests and prosperity is that Republic whose disintegration has been so ardently desired and so confidently predicted by many of our prominent statesmen, and whose commerce has been driven from the ocean by the instrumentality of subjects of Great Britain. If from no higher motive, it would be sound policy on our part to restore friendly relations with a government and people whose hostility must greatly prejudice us, and whose enmity in conjunction with that of others might, in process of time, accomplish our ruin.

Since I had the honour of addressing your Lordship two months ago in reference to the destruction

of the United States' carrying-trade by piratical vessels of war—built, equipped, armed and manned within English jurisdiction and beneath English law—the circumstances of the case have undergone very material modification. The Government of Her Majesty may have been right in refusing compensation for the constantly increasing damage and loss caused by the cruisers of a Confederation which has no diplomatic existence, and that no Power in the civilized world has yet recognised. We may have been correct in assuming the position that our laws have no inherent force to compel obedience from our own people, and have properly shielded ourselves behind the opinions of Judges and other legal authorities who search the Courts and dictionaries of a foreign nation for precedents and definitions whereby to avoid an obvious and politic decision upon an issue of the greatest magnitude, one in which the peace and prosperity of our country are nearly and intimately involved.

It is possible, my Lord, that the policy adopted by her Majesty's Government when the claim for compensation was first made by the Representative of the United States at the Court of St. James', was not the exact one which would have been followed had it been possible to foresee the events of the past twelve months. Until the commencement of 1863, the so-called Confederacy had maintained its position and promised in its turn to become the invader; the North was apparently divided, and the result of the

elections in the Free States was unquestionably assumed in England, to prove that President Lincoln's government was in the minority, and the masses of the Northern people disgusted with the war. But her Majesty's advisers having at the outset decided upon a policy which appeared to conduce most favourably to the interests of Great Britain, and more especially of her commerce, it was difficult to modify or change that policy, as the constitutional advisers of the Crown would thereby lay themselves open to the accusation of precipitancy and want of foresight at the outset. The position having been taken that her Majesty's Government was not responsible for the infringements by its own subjects of its laws, or rather of those enactments which, until the outbreak of the American war, were supposed to possess all the intention and force of laws—the ship-builders of the kingdom were left free to build vessels *ad libitum*, the very construction of which proved their sole object to be the pursuit of buccaneering ; whilst short-sighted men could rejoice over the increase of their own carrying-trade through the rapid and underhanded destruction of that of a friendly neighbour.

We should have to look far back into history to find such a series of wanton atrocities as those perpetrated by the Anglo-Confederate privateers. The cruelties committed upon the Spanish Main were to some extent, carried on under colour of law, and the captures at all events benefited the assailants ;

but, in the present instance, no advantage is expected, hoped for, or designed by the marauders ; nothing, in fine, is claimed by them but the prosecution of a malignant spite, a hollow and useless revenge. Were there, my Lord, some tribunal of the Nations before which the American people might carry this terrible and increasing grievance, the English government and nation would assuredly be held responsible for the atrocities of these privateers. Applying the pertinent query “ *Cui bono ?* ” it would be found that whilst the self-styled Confederates have in no sense advantaged themselves by the operations of these cruisers, the carrying trade of the United States has been vitally crippled and the commerce of the ocean mainly transferred to English bottoms. In face of such a tribunal, as of posterity, we could never rid ourselves of the guilt of having lent our shipyards, our mechanics, our sympathy, and the multiplied eccentricities of our legal procedure to the successful working-out of this result ; and we should be condemned in all costs and damages on the incontrovertible maxim — *qui facit per alium, facit per se*.

It is no distortion of facts or of argument to assert that, without our intermediary, the commerce of the United States would never have suffered as it has done during the last three years. When her Majesty’s Government hastened, in advance of all other nations, to accord belligerent rights to the rebellious States of the American Union, the Con-

federates possessed no privateers, and had no visible means for obtaining them. Furthermore, a maritime population in that section of the Republic had not hitherto been supposed to exist; and Great Britain was therefore placed in the anomalous position of recognizing the belligerent *rights* of a power which did not, and could not of itself, possess any belligerent *capabilities* whatever. For no one, my Lord, not even the most infatuated sympathiser with the objects of the Seceders, in or out of Parliament, would assume for a moment that the according of belligerent rights had any reference to the land operations of the contending forces; it could only contemplate that arena which Nature has made the common domain of humanity, for there alone could the interests of non-combatants be at all imperilled. Must it be supposed that her Majesty's advisers were deceived as to the condition of the South and ignorant of its want of maritime resources; or that they were previously made aware by what means the Confederates would eventually obtain the vessels, crews and armaments for destroying the commerce of their opponent?

The further this question is investigated, the more humiliating does the position of Great Britain appear. When the Anglo-Confederate privateer "Alabama," or, as she was at first known, the "290," managed to elude the vigilance of the officers of the Crown, the Government of her Majesty might to some extent shield itself from adverse criticism

under the plea of having given orders to delay her departure. The excuse could certainly not be made that our Government was ignorant of the purposes for which the vessel was designed, for the representative of the United States in London had given full and complete information upon this subject more than a month prior to the vessel's leaving Liverpool; but the important question presents itself—by whom was intelligence conveyed to the owners of the *Alabama* of the intended seizure of the vessel? If we accept the testimony of the officers of the privateer, they were forewarned by officers of her Majesty's Customs; but, in any case, it was impossible for them to obtain such information except by and through the subordinates of the Crown. The country has yet to learn whether any investigation has been made of a matter so nearly concerning the interests of the kingdom; for, according to the statements of Confederate officers, and the very nature of the case itself, the secrets of our Government may, it would appear, be divulged with impunity.

The American Government and people have some colour for believing that no intention was ever entertained of arresting the "*Alabama's*" departure from Liverpool; and that the warning privately conveyed to her owners was given with the object of ridding ourselves of responsibility. That warning was not conveyed, however, until all her preparations were completed; and if her fitting out at Liverpool were in contravention of our laws, thus demanding her

seizure by the officers of the Crown, she was equally amenable to seizure everywhere within British jurisdiction. Yet we find that the "Alabama" has frequently been in our Colonial waters and harbours, and, like her consorts, has invariably been permitted to stay as long as her commander deemed necessary, and to depart when he saw fit. The following extract from *Our Cruise in the Confederate States' War Steamer ALABAMA*,* will show how the privateers of the Confederacy are received by British officials.

"January 20th, 1863.—Land right ahead,—the
 "western part of Jamaica. * * * stood towards
 "Port Royal. * * * anchored in Port Royal har-
 "bour. Received an official visit from the flag-
 "ship. 21st, *Our commander waited upon the*
"Governor for permission to land prisoners, and
"effect the necessary repairs after our conflict.
"Permission was readily granted."

It would thus appear that what is illegal at Liverpool is perfectly correct in Jamaica; and that a vessel in England, suspected merely of belligerent intentions, may be seized by officers of the Crown; but, as soon as the suspicion gives place to absolute certainty, the offender is to receive every possible aid and comfort from the representatives of our Sove-

* *Our Cruise in the Confederate States' War Steamer Alabama.* The private Journal of an Officer. From a Supplement to the *South African Advertiser and Mail*, Cape Town, September 19, 1863.

reign in her Colonies. Were it not for the opportunity afforded to these privateers of refitting, coaling, and discharging prisoners within British jurisdiction and under British protection, the marauders could not by any chance keep the ocean; and yet no means have, it would seem, been taken to close our harbours to their operations.

The case of the Anglo-Confederate privateer "Georgia" is still worse than that of the "Alabama." Many months of wanton destruction of United States' shipping had shown the object for which the latter had sailed from the port of Liverpool, and yet her consort was permitted to depart without difficulty. The "Georgia" purported to be owned by Thomas Bold, a British subject, and was registered in his name at Her Majesty's Customs, Liverpool. That register was not changed until the 23rd of June, 1863; previous to which period she made several captures, amongst them the ship "George Griswold," returning home after bringing to this country the noble offering of American citizens to the starving operatives of Lancashire. In the journal of an officer of the privateer "Alabama," above referred to, there occurs this entry:—

"13th." (May, 1863)—"At 3 a.m., a steamer was observed to anchor about two miles distant. At daylight saw it was a brig-rigged screw steamer, presenting unmistakeable signs of being a war vessel. 8 a.m. Great was our astonishment to see the stars and bars hoisted at her peak.

“ Private signals were exchanged. She then got
 “ up steam and anchored near us. Soon after sent
 “ a boat on board, when it was found to be the C.S.
 “ St. ‘Georgia,’ 5 guns, Lieutenant Commander
 “ Maury. *Had captured one vessel,*” &c. &c.

The vessel here referred to as captured, as well as others destroyed subsequently by the “Georgia,” were the victims of a privateer registered in an English port and owned by a British subject; said register remaining unchanged until six weeks later than the 13th of May. The country has yet to learn that Thomas Bold, the acknowledged owner of the “Georgia,” has been required to give any explanation of his conduct in thus preying upon the commerce of a nation with whom we are at peace. It was formerly considered necessary for subjects of the British Crown, when engaged in privateering, to be provided with *letters of marque* before plying their vocation; but it would appear by the events of the past three years that our laws—when the United States are concerned—are not expected to be enforced; or, when attempted to be enforced, are proved to be meaningless and inoperative.

Worse than either of the above cases is that of the “Rappahannock,” until lately H.M.S. “Victor.” No one certainly will dare assume that the object of the purchase of this new vessel was known to our authorities; but while exonerating the officers of the Government from all participation in the schemes of Confederate agents—proved conclu-

sively by the prosecution of one of the Government employées—it certainly does appear strange that a vessel of such a character could be sold without sufficient guarantees being given as to the object of the purchase. The Confederate Government and its agents and tools in England must have been profoundly ignorant of our respect for international law, or egregiously vain of their ability to contravene our laws with impunity, ere they decided on a purchase which they well knew must seriously complicate our relations with the United States. But Confederate blindness and insults do not stop at the mere purchase: the vessel once in possession of their agent, repairs are immediately commenced upon her in the dockyard of Her Majesty at Sheerness. At the eleventh hour, when all the repairs are so near completion that the vessel may slip away at a moment's notice, it is found necessary to seize her; but as in the instance of the “Alabama,” some “friend at court” gives timely warning, and the Anglo-Confederate privateer “Rappahannock,” late H.M.S. “Victor,” steams away from a Government dockyard, in charge of a Government pilot, and arrives safely at Calais. This is the second instance in which British officials have been outwitted by Confederate emissaries in league with English agents; and it is due to the honour and reputation of our Government that the *modus operandi* should be sifted thoroughly, so as to discover by whose treachery the representatives of Mr. Jefferson Davis

in England obtain such early and precise intelligence upon the intentions of Her Majesty's advisers.

But these privateers, my Lord, are far from being the only shipping engaged in the service of the so-called Southern Confederacy. There is a fleet of many vessels occupied in carrying ammunition, coals, and stores of all kinds to these buccaneers; every one of them, so far as known, sailing under the English flag, manned by English sailors, and registered in an English port. The following extracts from "Our Cruise in the Confederate States' War Steamer *Alabama*," give the names of some of the vessels.

"On the 18th," (August 1862) "a sail was
 "observed making for the anchorage. In the even-
 "ing she anchored near us, when we found her to
 "be the '*Aggripina*,' of *London*, Captain McQueen,
 "having on board six guns, with ammunition, coals,
 "stores, &c., for us. Preparations were immedi-
 "ately made to transfer her cargo. On the after-
 "noon of the 20th, while employed discharging the
 "barque, the screw steamer '*Bahama*,' Captain
 "Tessier, arrived, having on board Commander
 "Raphael Semmes and officers of the Confederate
 "States' steamer '*Sumter*.' Hauled steamer
 "alongside, taking from her two thirty-two
 "pounders, with some stores, &c., which took us
 "until the following day."

"18th," (November)—"9.30 came to an anchor
 "in Port Royal harbour, Martinique. * * * Our

“store-ship ‘Aggripina’ was lying laden with coal
 “for our use. Letters were received by many on
 “board.”

“20th,” (January 1863)—“Land right ahead,
 “the western part of Jamaica. * * * Anchored in
 “Port Royal harbour. Received an official visit
 “from the flag-ship. 21st, our commander waited
 “upon the Governor for permission to land pri-
 “soners, and effect the necessary repairs after our
 “conflict. *Permission was READILY granted.* * * *
 “Hauled the brig ‘Reindeer,’ of London, along-
 “side, and commenced coaling, repairing damages,
 “caulking, &c.”

“19th,” (May)—“Received an intimation from the
 “authorities (Bahia) to the effect, that as they had
 “strong suspicions that the bark ‘Castor,’ of Liver-
 “pool, lying there with coal for the ‘Georgia,’ had
 “also a quantity of arms, &c. to be transferred to the
 “‘Alabama,’ they could not permit us to coal from
 “her. So took coal from the shore.”

Were it possible to obtain the complete list of all
 the vessels engaged in supplying the “Alabama”
 and her consorts with stores, without which their
 operations would be impossible of continuance, there
 would be found a considerable squadron, sailing
 under the English flag from London, Liverpool and
 other parts of the kingdom, with all the regularity
 of a recognised and lawful commerce. It would be
 no very difficult matter to obtain such a list, for
 there are so many parties concerned in the business

that the affair is openly talked of in our principal seaports. The Government of the Southern Confederacy has, in fact, established its Naval Department in Great Britain : its vessels are constructed in our shipyards ; its guns, ammunition, coals and stores are purchased and paid for here ; and its crews are almost entirely composed of British subjects and enlisted within English jurisdiction. Amongst the crew of the privateer " Alabama," the following persons are declared to be subjects of Great Britain by a seaman who lately quitted that vessel, and is at the present time in England. His evidence might lead to the detection of those merchants and others, in Liverpool and elsewhere, who are acting as agents of Mr. Davis' Naval Department.

David H. Llewellyn. (*Assistant Surgeon*)

James Low. (*4th Lieutenant.*)

M. J. Freeman. (*Chief Engineer.*)

Henry Alcott. (*Sailmaker.*)

Geo. T. Fulham. (*Master's mate.*)

William Forestall. (*Quartermaster.*)

R. Masters. (*Gunner.*)

George Addison.	(<i>Seaman.</i>)	John Duggan.	(<i>Seaman.</i>)
F. Townsend.	"	Thomas McMullen.	"
H. Fisher.	"	Peter Henry.	"
William Purdy.	"	Charles Goodwin.	"
Thomas Welch.	"	James Hicks.	"
Edward Fitzsimmons.	"	John McAlee.	"
Thomas Potter.	"	George Egerton.	"
Samuel Williams.	"	James McFaden.	"
Edgar Tripp.	"	Martin Molk.	"
James Busman.	"	William McGinley.	"
George Addison.	"	Joseph Neil.	"
George Yeoman.	"	Martin King.	"
George Freemantle.	"	Joseph Pearson.	"
F. Johns.	"	Joseph Conner.	"
John Roberts.	"	Thomas Weir. (<i>Gunner's mate.</i>)	"

Edward Ramer.	(Ship's car-	O. Duffy.	(Fireman.)
penter.)		Peter Duncan.	"
P. Bradley.	(Fireman.)	Andrew Shilling.	"
J. Origen.	"	Thomas Winter.	"
Thomas Murphy.	"		

The following seamen of the "Alabama" are stated to belong to the Royal Naval Reserve.

William Crawford.

W. Brinton.

P. Hughes.

W. Hearn.

J. Emory.

S. Henry.

M. Mars.

M. Marfarland.

Joseph Conner.

Robert Williams.

Thomas Williams.

Joseph Duggan.

Samuel Henry.

John Neil.

William Nevins.

David Roach.

James Smith.

J. Latham.

Brent Johnson.

It is also asserted on the testimony of many witnesses, that the men engaged on these privateers are paid by orders upon business firms in Liverpool and other of our seaports. Ample evidence to this effect might be forthcoming when the Government decides that the embarking of English subjects in such operations is not exactly consonant with our laws, or consistent with the neutrality proclaimed by the Sovereign.

It will, of course, be assumed by some parties, as it has been hitherto in and out of Parliament, that all these acts relating to the "Alabama," and other privateers, are strictly within the bounds of neutrality; that the Government of our Queen has no right to interfere with what they are pleased to term, "the operations of trade and commerce;" and that the United States have no just claims for damage on account of destruction of their shipping by English built, English armed, and English manned cruisers. The Government and people of the United States view the matter in a totally different light. On the 6th of October, 1863, the American Secretary of State wrote as follows to the United States' Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James.

* * * * *

"The United States understand that they are at peace with Great Britain, and that that power is obliged by treaties and international law to refrain, and to restrain its subjects from making war against the United States. Her Majesty's government probably concur in the legal principle thus asserted. The United States understand the facts in the case of the Alabama in a different sense from that which is accepted by Earl Russell. They understand that the Alabama is a pirate ship of war, roving over the seas capturing, burning, sinking and destroying American vessels, without any lawful authority from the British government or from any other sovereign power, in violation of the law of nations, and contemptuously defying all judicial tribunals equally of Great Britain and all other states. The United States understand that she was purposely built for war against the United States, by British subjects in a British port, and prepared there to be armed and equipped with a specified armament adapted to her construction for the very piratical career which she is now pursuing; that her armament and equipment, duly adapted to this ship of war and no other, were simultaneously prepared by the same British subjects in a British port, to be placed on board to complete her preparation for that career; that when she was ready and her arma-

ment and equipment were equally ready, she was clandestinely and by connivance sent by her British holders, and the armament and equipment were at the same time clandestinely sent through the same connivance by the British subjects, who had prepared them, to a common port outside of British waters, and there the armament and equipment of the Alabama as a ship of war were completed, and she was sent forth on her work of destruction with a crew chiefly of British subjects, enlisted in and proceeding from a British port, in fraud of the laws of Great Britain, and in violation of the peace and sovereignty of the United States. The United States understand that the purpose of the building, armament and equipment, and expedition of the vessel, was one single criminal intent, running equally through the building and the equipment and the expedition, and fully completed and executed when the Alabama was finally despatched, and that this intent brought the whole transaction of building, armament and equipment, within the lawful jurisdiction of Great Britain, where the main features of the crime were executed. The United States understand that they gave sufficient and adequate notice to the British government, that this wrongful enterprise was begun and was being carried out to its completion; and that upon receiving this notice, her Majesty's government were bound by treaty obligations, and by the law of nations to prevent its execution, and that if the diligence which was due had been exercised by the British government, the expedition of the Alabama would have been prevented, and the wrongful enterprise of British subjects would have been defeated. The United States confess that some effort was made by her Majesty's government, but it was put forth too late and was too soon abandoned. Upon these principles of law and these assumptions of fact, the United States do insist, and must continue to insist that the British government is justly responsible for the damages which the peaceful, law-abiding citizens of the United States sustain by the depredations of the Alabama. I cannot, therefore, instruct you to refrain from presenting the claims which you have now in your hands of the character indicated.

"In saying this, however, it is not to be that the United States intend to act dogmatically, or in a litigious spirit. They are seriously and earnestly desirous to maintain, not only peace, but even amity, with Great Britain. They understand how unavoidably grievances have reciprocally arisen out of the divergence of policies, which the two countries have adopted in regard to the present insurrection. This Government thinks it understands, and in some measure appreciates, the difficulties and embarrassments under which her Majesty's Government

are labouring, resulting from the pressure of interests and combinations of British subjects, calculated to compromise the neutrality which her Majesty has proclaimed, and tending to compromise the two countries in a destructive maritime war. This Government confesses very freely, that it does not regard the present hour as one that is entirely favourable to a calm and candid examination of either the facts or the principles involved in such cases as the *Alabama*. It looks forward to a period when our intestine war shall have ceased, and the interests and passions which it has awakened abroad as well as at home, shall have subsided and disappeared. Though indulging a confident belief in the correctness of our positions in regard to the claims in question, and others, we shall be willing at all times hereafter, as well as now, to consider the evidence and the arguments which her Majesty's Government may offer, to show that they are invalid, and if we shall not be convinced, there is no fair and just form of conventional arbitrament or reference to which we shall not be willing to submit them. Entertaining these views, the President thinks it proper for you to inform Earl Russell that you must continue to give him notice of claims of the character referred to when they arise, and that you shall propose to furnish him the evidence upon which they rest, as is customary in such cases, in order to guard against ultimate failure of justice. If he shall decline to receive the evidence, you will cause it to be duly registered and preserved, to be presented when a suitable occasion shall hereafter occur for renewing and urging prosecution of the claims.

" I am, sir, your obedient servant,

" WILLIAM H. SEWARD."

" CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, Esq., &c., &c., &c."*

Unfortunately for us, these are not the only claims for damages which the United States urge against us, and which, sooner or later, in coin or kind, they may exact from us. However conscientiously the Government of our Queen may have struggled to preserve neutrality between the belli-

* Message of the President of the U. S. to the two Houses of Congress at the commencement of the 38th Congress. Official Report, Part 1, pp. 447, 448, 449.

gerents, there is no disputing the fact that the sympathies and well-wishes of the governing class in Great Britain have, from the commencement of the war, been unmistakeably in favour of the rebellious States and their objects. Your Lordship faithfully represented the opinion of most Englishmen on the American question in the declaration that "the feeling of the majority was in favour of the North;" but, unfortunately, the majority of our people have no votes, and a very slight influence, if any, upon the national policy. The men of the Northern States know full well that the influence of our governing class, in every possible way short of openly-avowed interference, has from the outset and continuously been given to those States which are in rebellion against lawful government, and that sympathy, aid, and comfort have been accorded, not by any means to assist in the formation of a second Republic on the American Continent, but simply with the hope and intent of dividing and eventually destroying a nation whose strength was supposed by them to menace our prosperity, and whose system of government they considered a reflection upon their own. Statesmen have constantly advocated this *divide pro imperare* policy during the past three years, and the leading organs of our newspaper press have reiterated the idea in articles which have been republished in America and circulated through the length and breadth of the land. The threat, *Delenda est Carthago*, has been openly avowed by

influential men of all parties in the three kingdoms; and however desirous the Government at Washington may be to avoid complications for the present, the time is not far distant when the entire body of the American people, smarting from the injustice of such a policy, may compel their Government to exact compensation for the destruction of their commerce, and for the aid and comfort rendered to the rebellion by jealous and short-sighted Englishmen.

A threat, openly avowed, or covertly hinted at, of disastrous consequences to ourselves if we refuse to make compensation to the United States for damages arising from our non-agreement with their Government on the rights of secession, belligerency, and kindred subjects, would certainly not be received with favour by the people of this country. We have yet to learn that any such menace, open or otherwise, has been made, directly, or indirectly, by the American Government, or by any of its representatives. We have your Lordship's authority that no such threat has been made, and your Lordship's public career must long since have satisfied the world, as it has certainly has every right-minded Englishman, that no such threat could be held out to you with impunity. There are considerations involved in our dealings with the United States of incomparably greater weight than servile fear, namely, the preservation of our honour, and the advocacy of the same justice towards other nations which

characterises men of honour in dealing with each other.

But for those political aspirants who are now seeking to misrepresent the foreign policy of her Majesty's Government, in order to gain credit for a boldness they never possessed to any remarkable degree when in office, there is a consideration which must be overwhelming. The United States have, hitherto, been merely a defensive Power ; the present year will prove them capable, if necessity require, of carrying on offensive operations on the grandest scale. What, thus far, they have pleaded as simple justice, they will shortly have the strength to demand as a right ; and unless Great Britain be desirous of swarms of *Alabamas* and *Georgias* in every sea and ocean preying on her commerce, justice will be awarded them for the ravages of English-built and English-sustained privateers. The very assumption by your Lordship's opponents of a cringing policy towards the United States, taken, in connection with the utter absence of any proof to the accusation, will certainly lead the people of Great Britain to infer that the accusers are susceptible of such influences. These nervously brave gentlemen, so jealous of the national reputation for courage, and yet so afraid that no one possesses that quality but themselves, have now a splendid opportunity for conciliating the American people, and that too without the possibility of any reflection upon their boldness or patriotism.

The negro-owning, slavery-perpetuating, repudiating Confederacy of Mr. Jefferson Davis, has proved itself guilty of five several assaults upon our flag and sovereignty, each one more glaring than the affair of the *Trent*.

1stly. The so-called Southern Confederacy has organized an army on British soil, for the purpose of making war upon a nation with whom our Queen is at peace.

2ndly. It has raised a band of desperadoes within our jurisdiction, and committed piracy on the high seas.

3rdly. It has avowedly sent agents and moneys to this country, for the purpose of building and fitting out vessels-of-war, in contravention of our laws, and the order of our Queen.

4thly. It has enlisted men in the ports of Great Britain, with the avowed object of carrying on hostilities with a friendly nation.

5thly. Its privateers dishonour our flag by using that emblem of our nationality and freedom as a decoy to lure harmless merchantmen to destruction.

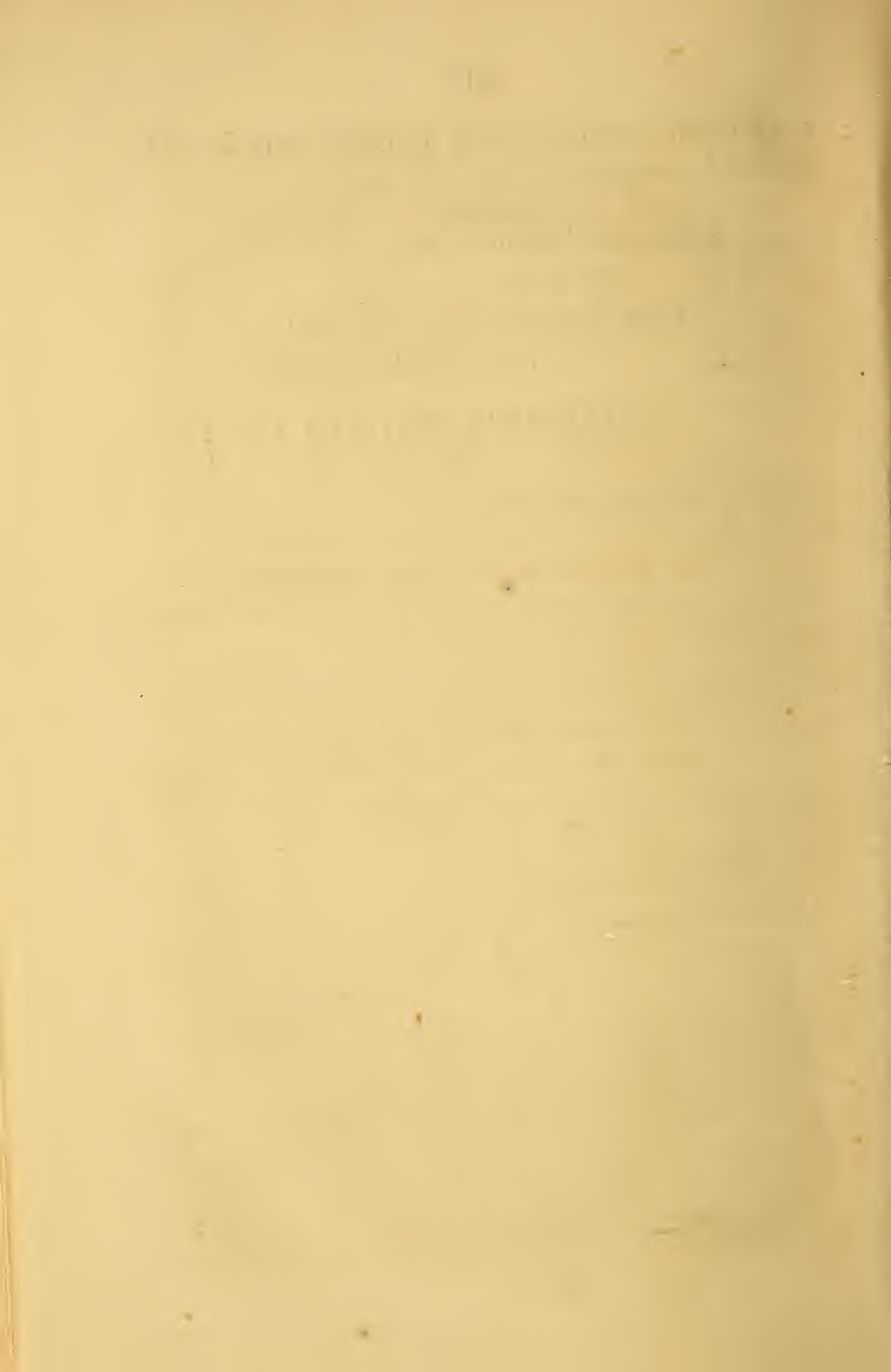
In view of these facts, your Lordship's opponents will, it is to be hoped, bring these insults of Mr. Davis' Confederacy before the notice of Parliament. We may fairly assume that a demand for papers on the question coming from these gentlemen, would not meet with a refusal from her Majesty's

Government, however much it might surprise her Majesty's subjects.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient,
and very humble Servant,

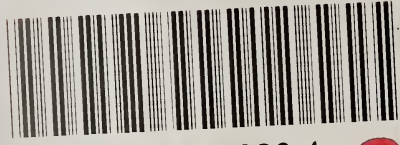
FREDERICK MILNES EDGE.

London, February 18th, 1864.





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